

Number of hearing impaired set to increase

AUSTRALIANS are damaging their ears to such an extent that up to a quarter of the population will be hearing-impaired within 20 years, says a leading expert.

The main problems are an ageing population and the overall increased loudness of the modern environment, says Associate Professor Robert Cowan, CEO of Hearing Co-operative Research Centre.

He says people should think about noise damage in a similar way to sunburn: a combination of how loud, how long and how often.

In addition, significant numbers of soldiers returning from duty in Iraq and Afghanistan have permanent ear damage, says Prof Cowan, who is speaking at the University of Melbourne on Tuesday.

The talk ahead of Hearing Awareness Week is part of the Royal Victorian Eye and Ear Hospital's 150th anniversary public lecture series.

"The louder the sound, the less available time you have without causing damage. Hearing loss is life-long. You don't get over it."

He says hearing loss is a normal consequence of ageing.

"But we are making it worse," he says.

"People are living longer and the concern is that we are going to have more people in the older age ranges who are going to have more hearing loss."

He says people should have routine ear checks after the age of 50 and younger people should see their GP if they have ringing in their ears or other issues.

"There are lots of options to restore communication. Far more options than have been available in the past."

He says scientists are working on ways to improve technology and cochlear implants should improve dramatically over the next 10 to 15 years.

At present, using a cochlear implant can be tiring, as the listener needs to concentrate both on active listening and the message itself, similar to what normal hearers experience when they are trying to communicate in a second language.



Take steps to prevent damage to hearing

WEARING protective equipment can help to prevent damage to one of your most important senses.

Once your hearing is damaged it will never return to exactly what it was, even with hearing aids or cochlear implants.

Wear earplugs or earmuffs when using home handyman equipment or anything that makes loud or continuous noise, such as musical instruments.

You should buy properly fitting ear buds for your personal music player.

Children must be protected from excessive noise. Don't take children to rock concerts where the sound may damage their tender ears.

If you have to yell to be heard by the person next to you, the noise could be damaging your hearing.

Having the music loud in your car could damage your ears and those of anyone in the car. It doesn't show people how good your stereo system is. It shows people that you will be looking at hearing aids later in your life.

During Hearing Awareness Week, there are opportunities to check your hearing for free and to find out more information ways to protect your hearing and prevent further damage.

Better Hearing Australia (Wagga) Inc.

We can help you!

We are a self-help group dedicated to helping hearing impaired people improve their quality of life by teaching new skills to help adjust to their loss of hearing.

Sessions are held on Mondays from 10am - 11am at the rear of 12 Docker Street, Wagga

Enquiries phone 6922 1197 or 6925 2002

Better Hearing Australia (BHA) provides support & guidance for all aspects of hearing loss.

Support for hearing impaired

WE have difficulty convincing the world around us that the hearing-impaired need special consideration before we can go on to contribute to the rest of the community as well as anyone else. Why is this?

The simple fact is that because we look so hale and hearty, the casual onlooker does not realise what it's like to live in a world of silence or muffled sounds, while the rest of the world gets on with it. What the rest of us take for granted as we go about our business in our day-to-day lives, the profoundly deaf and hearing-impaired need to work at to just comprehend what is being said, before getting on with the business of day-to-day living.

For the most part, this additional burden is exhausting.

The increased effort comes from straining to get maximum input from assistive listening devices or Auslan signing; from

paying attention to all the available visual cues, like facial expressions, lip-reading and other gestures produced during an exchange – all the while attempting to cancel out background sounds that interfere with reception or ones that simply serve to distract.

In celebration of Canberra's Centenary Year, we at the ACT Deaf Resource Centre are pulling all stops out to ensure our Hearing Awareness Week Expo at the Hellenic Club will be bigger and better than our successful Expos of past years.

As previously, Australian Hearing will provide hearing screening tests, free of charge, on the day.

Please phone (02) 6232 3200 in advance, to arrange for your free hearing test.

The expo will be officially opened at 10.30am by Minister for Disability Joy Burch MLA.

ACT Deafness Resource Centre **HEARING AWARENESS WEEK EXPO 2013**

29TH AUGUST 2013



10AM-4PM | GOLD COIN ENTRY

OFFICIAL OPENING @ 10.30AM BY MINISTER JOY BURCH, MLA
MINISTER FOR DISABILITY

Come along in our Centenary Year & enjoy:
Guest speakers | A mix of stalls | Ask questions & make friends

GOLD SPONSORS Canberra Audiology & The Shepherd Centre
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ANNUAL DRC CANBERRA EXPO
HEARING AWARENESS WEEK 2013
The Olympus Room – The Hellenic Club, Phillip ACT 2606

BRONZE SPONSORS ACE Communications | Disability Act Phonak | SCIC Canberra

FOR YOUR FREE HEARING SCREENING BOOKINGS PHONE 02 6232 3200